

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 H-01 MC-02 AID-05 IGA-02
OMB-01 TRSE-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00
INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 ACDA-07 L-03 /077 W
-----060656Z 078022 /12

R 051100Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY SANA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 886
INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
CHUSMTM DHAHRAN
USCINCEUR
COMIDEASTFOR

S E C R E T SANA 1315

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, SA, YE, US
SUBJECT: F-5 PROGRAM FOR YEMEN

REF: STATE 069611; SNA 1216 (NOTAL)

BEGIN SUMMARY: WHAT ABOUT F-5'S FOR YEMEN? END SUMMARY.

1. PRESIDENT HAMDHI HAS AS MUCH AS TOLD US (SEPTTEL) THAT HE HAS BEEN OFFERED -- AND MAY ACCEPT -- MIG-21'S TO MODERNIZE HIS TINY AIR FORCE. (WE HAVE REPORTS OF THIS FROM OTHER SOURCES. SEE SANA REFTTEL.) HE SAYS HE HAS NO RPT NO OTHER OFFERS, AND IF SAUDIS WOULD OFFER HIM WESTERN PLANES HE WOULD ACCEPT THEM INSTEAD. HE SEEMS TO THINK SAUDIS WANT HIM TO WAIT 5 YEARS OR MORE (AS IN THEIR ORIGINAL TEN YEAR PROGRAM FOR YEMEN). HOWEVER, HE SAID, HE WOULD DIVERT HIS PRESENT PILOTS (ALL TRAINED

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ON MIG-17'S) TO F-5 TRAINING IF THE SAUDIS DESIRED TO MAKE PLANES AVAILABLE SOONER.

2. AS DEPARTMEN KNOWS, SAUDIS HAVE ASKED US FOR PRICE AND BUDGET DATA ON A SQUADRON OF F-5E'S FOR YEMEN SUGGESTING THEY INTEND TO MOVE UP DELIVERY OF AIRCRAFT, AS WE HAVE URGED THEM TO DO IN PAST. WE

HAVE DECIDED, HOWEVER, TO "POSTPONE PROVISION OF P&B DATA UNTIL POLICY REVIEW ON MILITARY TRANSFERS IS COMPLETED" (STATE REFTTEL).

3. WE HAVE NOT BEEN TOLD THAT POSTPONEMENT IS CONNECTED WITH GENERAL DESIRE TO REDUCE ARMS SALES TO MIDDLE EAST, BUT IT SEEMS LIKELY TO US THIS IS REASON. IF SO, ASSUME DEPARTMENT IS ASKING ITSELF NUMBER OF QUESTIONS:

(A) ARMS SALES HERE HAVE BEGUN BASED ON SAUDI STUDY WHICH WE SPECIFICALLY APPROVED IN ADVANCE. STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS WERE MODEST IN SIZE AND TECHNOLOGY -- WESTERN EQUIPMENT FOR SIX BRIGADES OF INFANTRY (LESS TANKS) AND (AT SOME TIME) REPLACEMENT OF 25 YEAR OLD MIG'S. WILL A CUT IN PROJECTED SALES TO YEMEN ADD MUCH TO CUTS MADE ELSEWHERE? IN MILITARY TERMS, DOES IT MAKE SENSE TO ELIMINATE ALL AIRCRAFT FROM FORCE MODERNIZATION? (B) AIM IN YEMEN WAS ALWAYS TO FORGE STRONG SAUDI-YEMENI TIES AT EXPENSE OF SOVIETS. IF WE ABRIDGE PROGRAM DRASTICALLY NOW, WHAT WILL THIS DO TO SAUDIS? TO SOVIETS? WILL SOVIETS DENY THEMSELVES OPPORTUNITY TO RESTORE SOME OF THEIR ONCE DOMINANT POSITION HERE? (C) IF USG GUIDELINES ARE BEING DESIGNED WITH OUR MIDEAST SETTLEMENT ROLE IN MIND, CAN THEY BE APPLIED AUTOMATICALLY TO A COUNTRY LIKE YEMEN, WHICH IS LONGWAY FROM THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT BOTH IN TERMS OF DISTANCE AND SENTIMENT? (D) DOES YEMEN HAVE ROLE TO PLAY IN OUR HOPES FOR MODERATION IN SOUTH YEMEN AND HORN OF AFRICA? WILL
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SOURCE OF ITS ARMS AND MILITARY TRAINING MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE IN THIS ROLE?

4. NORMALLY WE WOULD RECOMMEND THAT USG CONTACT SUADIS, GET THEM TO TAKE LEAD WE CAN FOLLOW HERE TO AVERT MIG DELIVERIES. WE WOULD TELL THEM (QUITE ACCURATELY) THAT MIG'S WILL ENTRENCH SOVIET MILITARY MISSION IN YEMENI AIR FORCE FOR NEXT DECADE. THEY WILL HINDER SAUDI ROLE IN YEMEN AND CONTINUED REORIENTATION OF THIS COUNTRY -- AND POTENTIALLY SOUTH YEMEN -- FROM LEFT TO RIGHT IN NEXT FEW YEARS. WE WOULD PRODUCE LOA FOR F-5'S.

5. WE THINK, INCIDENTALLY, THIS TACTIC IS RIGHT ONE AND WOULD WORK WITH BOTH SAUDIS AND YEMENIS.

6. HOWEVER, THIS TACTIC BECOMES IMPOSSIBLE IF WE AREN'T GOING TO SELL F-5'S TO YEMEN.

7. WE NEED GUIDANCE IF WE AREN'T GOING TO SELL F-5'S
HERE. WE MUST, AT MINIMUM, EXPLAIN CHANGE OF POLICY
TO YEMENIS AND SAUDIS. IF WE ARE GOING TO SELL THEM,
WE SHOULD ANNOUNCE IT SOON, GIVEN ABILITY OF SOVIETS
TO DELIVER MIG'S QUICKLY. REALIZE THAT IT IS IN-
CONVENIENT FOR QUESTIONS OF EQUIPMENT AND OF TIME
IN YEMEN TO FORCE DECISIONS ON POLICY. IT'S ALSO
DISAGREEABLE TO HAVE HAMDI USE SOVIETS AS LEVERAGE ON
US. ALL WE CAN SAY IS THAT HE ISN'T BLUFFING, GIVEN
HIS CONCERN FOR INTERNAL SECURITY AND HIS AVERSION TO
A FIVE YEAR WAIT. SO: WHAT ABOUT F-5'S FOR YEMEN?
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY ASSISTANCE, FIGHTER AIRCRAFT, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 05-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977SANA01315
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770119-0515
Format: TEL
From: SANA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770486/aaaacxet.tel
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Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 STATE 69611
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2892634
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: F-5 PROGRAM FOR YEMEN
TAGS: MASS, SA, YE, US, (AL-HAMDI, IBRAHIM)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/d415efa9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009